



Animas-La Plata Project

Volume 3

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation

February 2000

Draft Supplemental EIS Released

On January 14, 2000, the Department of the Interior (Interior), through the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Indian Tribes (Colorado Ute Tribes), released a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Animas-La Plata Project (ALP Project). The DSEIS evaluates the potential impacts of implementing the Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-585) through construction of the ALP Project in order to provide the Colorado Ute Tribes an assured long-term water supply to satisfy their senior water rights claims. The DSEIS is intended to supplement the environmental documents prepared by Reclamation in 1980 and 1996 for the ALP Project, as well as provide an environmental

evaluation to Interior and other involved parties in reaching a final settlement of the water rights claims of the Colorado Ute Tribes.

A Notice of Availability (NOA) was published in the Federal Register on January 14, 2000, and copies of the DSEIS were mailed to more than 200 elected representatives, federal, state and local agencies, Native American groups, organizations and local libraries. In addition a "stand-alone" summary of the ALP Project DSEIS was mailed to over 800 individuals, agencies, and organizations on the ALP mailing list. Anyone interested in receiving the complete DSEIS, consisting of Volumes 1 and 2, should refer to the "Who to Contact" box in this newsletter. The full text of the DSEIS is also available on the Internet at <http://www.uc.usbr.gov> under the Environmental Studies, Summaries & Reports link.

Ways to Comment on the DSEIS

- Attend one of the public hearings and submit oral and/or written comments during the hearing.
- Mail your written comments to:
Mr. Pat Schumacher
Four Corners Division Manager
Bureau of Reclamation
835 East 2nd Street,
Suite 300
Durango, CO
81301-5475
- Submit your comments electronically to the following email address:
ALPDSEISComments@uc.usbr.gov
(This email address is ONLY for comments on the DSEIS.)

To be most helpful, comments on the DSEIS should be as specific as possible. **All comments must be received by close of business on March 17, 2000.**

How You Can Participate in the DSEIS Review Process

The DSEIS is subject to a 60-day public review process. The review period began on January 14, 2000 and will end on March 17, 2000. During this time, Reclamation will solicit input from the public in several different ways. Interested individuals, agencies, and organizations are encouraged to attend and participate in public hearings which will be held during the month of February (see box for dates, times and locations). Following the close of the public review period, Reclamation will evaluate all comments received and make any appropriate changes to the document based on those comments before preparing a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for release in May 2000.

ALP Project DSEIS Public Hearings Schedule

- Durango, Colorado — February 15, 2000
7:00 - 9:00 p.m., Double Tree Hotel, Main Ballroom,
501 Camino Del Rio, Durango, Colorado
- Farmington, New Mexico — February 16, 2000
7:00 - 9:00 p.m., Farmington Civic Center,
Exhibition Hall #1, 200 West Arrington,
Farmington, New Mexico
- Denver, Colorado — February 17, 2000
7:00 - 9:00 p.m., Denver Convention Center,
Room A-209, 700 14th Street, Denver, Colorado

Reclamation will make every effort to make these hearings accessible to disabled attendees. Please call (970) 385-6500 with any special needs or requests at least three days prior to the hearing.

Summary of the ALP Project DSEIS



Who to Contact

If you would like to receive a copy of the DSEIS, or wish to be added to the ALP Project mailing list, contact Mr. Pat Schumacher, Four Corners Division Manager
Bureau of Reclamation
835 East 2nd Street,
Suite 300
Durango, CO 81301-5475

Tel: (970) 385-6500
Fax: (970) 385-6539
E-mail: pschumacher@uc.usbr.gov
Website: www.uc.usbr.gov

Reclamation and Interior are proposing to develop a modified ALP Project in southwestern Colorado and northwestern New Mexico for the purpose of finally implementing the provisions of the 1988 Settlement Act. The location map shows the ALP Project area.

The DSEIS evaluates 10 separate alternatives, including 9 "action" alternatives that include several structural and non-structural components, and a "no action" alternative. Table 1 provides a listing of each alternative and associated name. The 10 alternatives were evaluated in light of the project purpose and need and their relative environmental impacts.

Following the evaluation process, two of the alternatives that were evaluated, Alternatives 4 and 6, warranted further refinement due to the closeness in their overall comparison of environmental impacts. In addition, they each represented a significantly different approach to meeting the purpose and need of the ALP Project. Refined Alternative 4 is principally a structural alternative and Refined Alternative 6 is principally a non-structural alternative. These two alternatives are described in more detail below. The DSEIS evaluates both Refined Alternatives 4 and 6 in terms of potential environmental impacts and possible mitigation measures that could be implemented to eliminate or reduce such impacts. The analysis also includes an assessment of each alternative to meet the project's purpose and need. The DSEIS concludes that Refined Alternative

4 best meets the project's purpose and need with the least environmental impact. Accordingly, it is designated as Reclamation's Preferred Alternative.

Refined Alternative 4 includes both structural and non-structural elements designed to achieve the fundamental purpose of providing the Colorado Ute Tribes with an assured water supply in satisfaction of their water rights as determined by the 1988 Settlement Act and by providing for identified municipal and industrial (M&I) water needs in the project area. A key feature of the project is a 120,000 acre-foot (af) reservoir in Ridges Basin near Durango, Colorado. With development of the structural component of this alternative, the Colorado Ute Tribes would still be approximately 13,000 af short of the total quantity of depletion recognized in the Settlement Act. Therefore, the non-structural component of the project would establish and utilize a \$40 million water acquisition fund which the Colorado Ute Tribes could use to acquire water rights on a willing buyer/willing seller basis to purchase approximately 13,000 acre-feet per year of depletions.

The structural components and associated features of Refined Alternative 4 include the Durango Pumping Plant and Ridges Basin Inlet Conduit, Ridges Basin Dam and Reservoir, and the Navajo Nation Municipal Pipeline. Any recreation facilities at Ridges Basin Reservoir would be constructed by non-Federal entities.

The non-structural component consists of

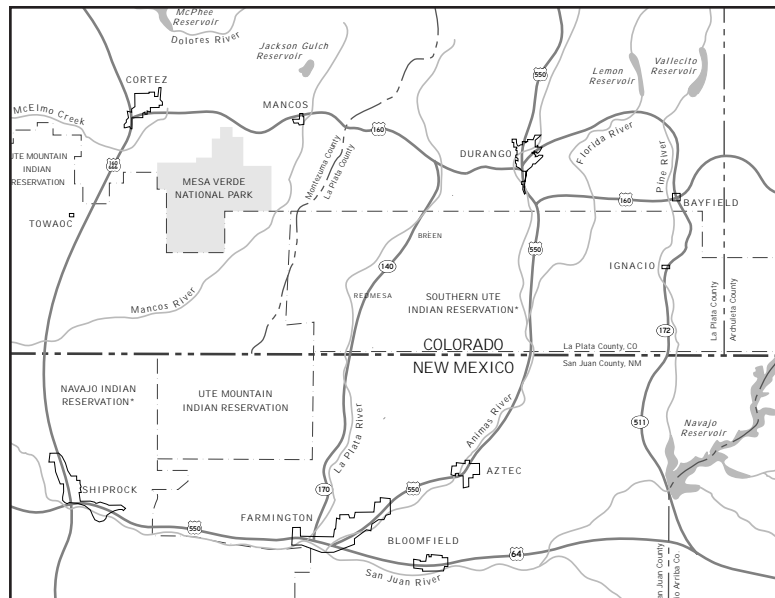
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Table 1 – ALP Project Alternatives

Number	Title
1	Administration Proposal
2	Administration Proposal with Recreation Element Added
3	Administration Proposal with San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (SJRBRIP) Element Added
4	Administration Proposal with SJRBRIP and Recreation Element Added
5	Animas-La Plata Reconciliation Plan
6	Animas River Citizen's Coalition Conceptual Alternative
7	1996 Final Supplement to the Final Environmental Statement Recommendation Action
8	Administration Proposal with an Alternative Water Supply for Non-Colorado Ute Indian Entities
9	Citizens' Progressive Alliance Alternative
10	No Action Alternative

acquiring water from existing agricultural users throughout the southwestern Colorado area, within the associated historic shortages and depletions, so no additional water depletion would be needed to meet the demands of the non-structural components.

Refined Alternative 6 proposes that water to satisfy the Settlement Act be obtained through augmentation and coordinated operation of existing federal projects in the area close to the Tribes' reservations and through purchase of irrigated agricultural lands and associated water rights throughout southwest Colorado. This alternative also has a relatively small structural component consisting of raising Lemon Dam to increase the capacity and annual yield of Lemon Reservoir.



Further refinement to Refined Alternatives 4 and 6 could take place based on comments received during the DSEIS public comment period, just as refinements were made to the Administration Proposal as a result of the scoping process.

About this Newsletter

This is the third in a series of newsletters designed to bring you the latest information on the environmental review process for the Animas-La Plata Project and final implementation of the 1988 Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement Act. Copies of the first two newsletters are available on the ALP Web page at www.uc.usbr.gov. This issue focuses on the preparation and release of the DSEIS. Future editions of the newsletter will be published at approximately 3-4 month intervals. Look for the next issue to follow the close of the comment period on March 17, 2000.

Cost Comparison

Table 2 is provided to give the public a better understanding of the costs of the various descriptions of the Animas-La Plata Project as it has evolved since the original multi-purpose project.

Table 2 – Animas - La Plata Project Cost Comparison (April 1999 \$Millions)

PROJECT COMPONENTS	Refined Alternative 4	Refined Alternative 6	Reconciliation Plan 1996	1996 FSFES Phase 1, Stage A	Full Project Phases 1 and 2
Dam, Pumping Plant, & Inlet Conduit	\$ 195.0*	\$ 0	\$ 238.0	\$ 246.0	\$ 246.0
Enlarge Lemon Dam and Reservoir	na	28.0	na	na	na
Other Costs to Complete the Alternative	na	na	14.8	22.0	379.7
Water Acquisition Fund (13,000 afy depletion)	40.0	na	na	na	na
Purchase Land (30,432 afy depletion)	na	195.0	na	na	na
Engineering, Hydrology, Legal for Water Rights	na	10.0	na	na	na
Red Mesa Reservoir Storage (200 af)	na	1.0	na	na	na
Wetlands & Wildlife (Avoidance & Mitigation)	12.1	14.0	21.2	21.2	37.8
Cultural Resources	7.5	1.0	8.8	8.8	21.0
Total New Costs	\$ 254.6	\$ 249.0	\$ 282.8	\$ 298.0	\$ 684.5
OTHER					
Project Costs Incurred Since 1968	\$ 75.7	\$ 75.7	\$ 75.7	\$ 75.7	\$ 75.7
Navajo Nation Municipal Pipeline	\$ 24.0	\$ 24.0	na	na	na
Non-Federal Recreation Development	\$ 12.0	na	na	na	na

*Includes cost of conservation pool (\$25 million)



DSEIS also Addresses Other Impact Considerations

The DSEIS also includes updated information on several connected, cumulative, and related actions affecting water resources within the San Juan River Basin. Included are the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program; the

Navajo Dam Operation environmental impact statement; completion of the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project; the Jicarilla Apache Tribe Water Rights Settlement; and the proposed Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project.

Timeline of Project

